



For Immediate Release  
November 14, 2007

Contact: Carol Guthrie  
(202) 224-4515

## **BAUCUS CALLS ON JAPAN TO LIFT BEEF RESTRICTIONS**

*Senator asks President Bush to resolve trade issues during meeting with Prime Minister  
Fukuda*

**Washington, DC** – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) today called on President Bush to encourage Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda to lift that country's unscientific restrictions on U.S. beef imports, and to resolve concerns related to Japan's pharmaceutical repricing practices that could hinder innovative companies in both countries. Baucus addressed these concerns in a letter to President Bush, ahead of a meeting scheduled to take place on Friday between the leaders of the two nations.

**"I've said time and time again – and the World Animal Health Organization has said it too – all U.S. beef is safe and healthy, regardless of age," said Baucus. "I hope these two leaders walk out of that meeting with a date set for Japan to lift its restrictions on U.S. beef imports. It is long past time for Japan to fully open its market to the tastiest, most delicious beef in the world."**

Japan banned U.S. beef in 2003, after a cow in Washington state tested positive for bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE. Japan resumed shipments of U.S. beef from cattle 20 months of age or younger in July 2006, but international health standards certify the safety of all U.S. beef, bone-in and boneless, regardless of age.

The text of the Senator's letter follows here.

November 14, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to encourage you to work with Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda to strengthen U.S.-Japan economic ties and expand our historic partnership. U.S.-Japan relations are an important anchor for American leadership in Asia, a region that promises our greatest challenges and opportunities for decades to come.

--more--

A critical starting point to a stronger future relationship is a final end to persistent and discriminatory economic policies. As you know, I have long fought to open the Japanese beef market, and it remains my primary concern. Four years since banning U.S. beef imports, Japan continues to severely restrict market access, limiting U.S. imports to beef from cattle 20 months or younger. These restrictions run contrary to the scientific guidelines established by the World Animal Health Organization (OIE) and, in turn, raise questions under World Trade Organization norms. The world's scientists and consumers agree that U.S. beef is healthy and safe, whether boneless or bone-in, and regardless of age. Full access to Japan's beef market is overdue. It is time for Prime Minister Fukuda to commit to open this market by a date certain.

I also have serious concerns about proposed Japanese changes that may harm innovative research-based companies and drive down reimbursement rates for pharmaceuticals and medical devices. Japan has proposed expanding the practice of repricing pharmaceuticals when they increase sales or market share – a move that would threaten to discourage investment in innovation. Furthermore, proposals to impose deep reimbursement cuts on medical devices and pharmaceuticals and to increase the frequency of price revisions could undermine the ability of manufacturers to introduce the most innovative products in Japan, to the detriment of U.S. companies and Japanese patients.

The future holds great promise for the U.S.-Japan ties. Yet key to realizing this future is taking constructive and cooperative action today. I hope that you and Prime Minister Fukuda will work to find new and creative ways to resolve existing problems and build an enduring relationship worthy of our past successes.

Respectfully yours,

Max Baucus

###